

AMENDMENTS IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for a pivot assembly comprising:

at least one pair of ball bearings;

a shaft having a first end and a second end to each of which one of the at least one pair of ball bearings has been mated;

a sleeve, having an integrally formed inner wall and disposed between the at least one pair of ball bearings and the first end of the shaft, such that the sleeve is mated to an ~~inner wall of~~ an outer circumference of the at least one pair of ball bearings; and

a seal member fixed to an outer circumference of the shaft and to an inner circumference of the sleeve, so as to cover an outer end face of the at least one ball bearing,

wherein the seal member has a cut in ~~a radial direction along the entire circumference of~~ the seal member, the cut positioned in towards a middle portion of the seal member along a radial direction of the seal member.

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the seal member is fixed by welding to the outer circumference ~~to~~ of the shaft.

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the ~~seal member has a cut~~ in the seal member extends along an entire circumference of the seal member.

4. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the cut is of a thin-width and in a direction inclined with respect to an axis line of the shaft.